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11 PARTIES WITH 91 MPs ON THE FENCE

While 65 parties have joined either the BJP or the Congress-led coalition, at least 11 parties with 91 members in Parliament have chosen to stay neutral for now in the high-stakes general elections next year. Three of the fence-sitters rule fairly large states — Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha — that together send 63 members to Lok Sabha — where other opposition parties have been pushed to the margins | P9

5 terror suspects held in B'loru, arms recovered

Were planning to target installations in IT city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

SLEUTHS of Central Crime Branch (CCB) arrested five terror suspects from a residential complex on Sultanpalya Main Road near Mukar Road near Mukar Road Masjid at RT Nagar in the city on Tuesday. These suspects were allegedly radicalised at Parappana Agrahara Central Prison by a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative to carry out terror attacks in Bengaluru. Seven country-made pistols, 45 rounds of ammunition, walkie-talkie sets, a dagger and 12 mobile phones have been recovered from them.

The arrested are Syed Suhel Khan (24), a resident of 2nd Cross, Sultanpalya Main Road;

Mohammed Umar (29) of Kodigehalli; Jahid Tabrez (25) of Bhadrappa Layout; Syed Muddasir Pasha (28) of Dinnur Main Road; and Mohammed Faisal (30) of Pulakeshinagar.

Dr G: They were planning something big

Home Minister G Parameswara on Wednesday said the five terror suspects were planning to attack vital installations in Bengaluru and other parts of the country. Speaking in the Assembly, he said the terrorists were planning something big.

(LeT) operative, one of the accused in serial blasts in Bengaluru on July 25, 2008, that left one dead and 20 injured. P7



Mohd Faisal Mudassir Pasha Suhel Khan Mohd Umar Jahid Tabrez

TEESTA GRANTED REGULAR BAIL BY SC

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

CIVIL rights activist Teesta Setalvad was on Wednesday granted regular bail by the Supreme Court in a case of fabricating evidence to implicate high dignitaries in the 2002 Gujarat riots. The court quashed a Gujarat High Court order to arrest her, saying it was 'totally perverse' and contradictory. A bench comprising Justices BR Gavai, A S Bopanna and Dipankar Datta said Teesta's custodial interrogation was unnecessary since the chargesheet

had already been filed and the documentary evidence forming the basis of the case was already available. It directed her not to attempt to influence or intimidate witnesses.

The bench criticised the high court's order, saying that on one hand it contended that considering evidence to determine a prima facie case was unnecessary, while on the other hand, it claimed that the accused's failure to challenge the FIR or chargesheet under

specific sections meant she couldn't contest the prima facie case. Elsewhere in the verdict, the high court judge goes on to discuss the statements of some witnesses and finds that a prima facie case is made out against Teesta.

The bench said the considerations to grant bail included whether or not there is a prima facie case; possibility of tampering evidence or influencing witnesses; fleeing; and the gravity of the offence.

"If the observations made

are to be accepted, then no bail at the pre-trial stage can be granted unless the accused files an application for quashing of the proceedings against him under section 428 CrPC or Article 226 before the high court or Article 32 before this court. To say the least, these findings are totally perverse," the bench said in the order.

The FIR against Teesta was lodged following an SC verdict on June 24, 2022 in the case of Zakia Jafri, who has alleged a larger conspiracy behind the 2002 communal riots.



Ready to discuss Manipur in House: Centre

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE government on Wednesday said it was ready to discuss the Manipur situation in Parliament, but called the Opposition's demand for a statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue an excuse to disrupt proceedings.

Briefing the media after an all-party meeting called by the government on the eve of Parliament's monsoon session, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the government is willing to discuss the Manipur situation as and when the Lok Sabha Speaker and Rajya Sabha Chairman decide its date and time.

The meeting, attended by 34 parties, was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. "The government has 31 legislative items. All parties wanted a discussion on Manipur and the government is ready for it."

Other issues that came up included the misuse of law enforcement agencies, attacks on the federal structure through Governors and railway safety.

Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said his party's main demand was a debate on Manipur. "Violence broke out two months ago and the PM is yet to speak on it. He should at least make a statement in Parliament and allow us to hold a debate," he said.

Manipur also figured at the Business Advisory Committee meet. MPs part of INDIAN, the Opposition alliance, will meet on Thursday to chalk out their strategies for the session.

EXPRESS READ

16 electrocuted at project site in U'khand

New Delhi: At least 16 people, including a police sub-inspector and three home guards, were electrocuted and two others seriously injured on Wednesday morning at a sewage treatment plant of the Namami Gange project on the banks of Alaknanda in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. A power transformer also reportedly blew up | P10

ASIA CUP DATES OUT, INDIA vs PAKISTAN ON SEPT 2

India play their matches in Sri Lanka. Pakistan play Nepal in opener in Multan. The final will be played in Colombo on Sept 17 | P15

Uproar in House over role of babus in INDIA meet, 10 BJP MLAs suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE legislative Assembly witnessed ugly scenes on Wednesday as 10 BJP MLAs were suspended for creating a ruckus over state government deputing IAS officers to receive politicians from other states on their arrival in Bengaluru to take part in the opposition parties' conclave.

While the issue rocked both Houses, the suspended MLAs were bundled out of the Assembly by marshals as BJP and JDS MLAs protested after the speaker's order.

MLAs CN Ashwath Narayan, Sunil Kumar, R Ashoka, Araga Jnanendra, Vedavyas Kamath, Yashpal Suvarna, Dheeraj Muniraj, Umanath Kotian, Aravind Bellad and Bharath Shet-

ty were suspended for tearing the copies of Bills and throwing them at the speaker's chair. The 10 MLAs have been barred from attending the session which ends on Friday.

Following this, BJP and JDS MLAs sought the Assembly secretary's permission to move a motion for removal of the speaker. Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Munirathna and other senior BJP MLAs, who staged a protest in the House, were also forcibly sent out.

As they continued their protest at the lobby, JDS Legislature Party leader and former CM HD Kumaraswamy joined them. In the meantime, Yatnal felt uneasy and collapsed. He was immediately rushed to hospital. CONTINUED ON: P6



BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal collapses during a protest against the state government in Bengaluru on Wednesday | NAGARAJA GADKAL

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